

**A STUDY OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SCHEDULED CASTE STUDENTS IN  
SECOND LANGUAGE IN RELATION TO THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AT  
HIGH SCHOOL STAGE**

**\*Dr. (Mrs.) Mahashevtta**

**Abstract**

*Academic achievement, as a matter of fact, is a very complex variable. It is the resultant of diverse factors acting and interacting in a variety of ways. Various organic and environment factors like sex, intelligence, motivation, interest, aptitude, home environment, birth order, socio-economic status and self-concept etc. determine the academic achievement of students. In a developing country like India with limited resources, it is all the more important that whatever is available for school children should be fully utilized. Therefore, education of the scheduled castes has been adopted in India and on a large scale provision is made for them for proper social mobility. The socio-economic status of parents influences the achievement of child as a whole. Children coming from families with higher socio-economic status are provided with better facilities and thus perform better. Therefore,, to promote intellectual pool of the country efforts should be done at all levels to increase the socio-economic status of scheduled caste students.*

**Key words:** *Academic Achievement, Schedule Caste Students, Socio-economic Status*

**INTRODUCTION**

Education is the key to national prosperity and welfare. It plays a vital role in building a society. A modern society cannot achieve its aim of economic growth, technical development and cultural advancement without fully harnessing the talents of its citizen. Therefore, it is most

important form of national investment. Educationists, thus, strive to develop fully the intellectual potentialities of the students and make efforts to see that their potentialities are fully realized and channelized for the benefit of the individuals and of the society.

The present day Indian society is divided into various caste groups which interact within their own formations with the result that those with a high educational profile continue to be in an advantageous position, and those who were disadvantaged ones continue to remain so. Of these, the Scheduled Castes form the largest part. These castes are known as Scheduled Castes by the inclusion of them, in the schedule appended by the govt. of India acc. to Act 1935. Article 341 of the Indian Constitution allows the government to compile a schedule (list) of castes, races, or tribes or parts of groups within castes, races, or tribes that are economically and socially disadvantaged and are therefore, entitled to protection and specified benefits under the constitution. Untouchables, also known as Harijans (q.v.) or Dalits (q.v.), constitute the bulk of Scheduled Castes. Thus, Scheduled Castes generally represent those communities who are placed at the bottom of traditional Hindu Caste System. These castes were denied any access to education in the traditional Hindu society. These castes have been, for centuries, the most neglected, marginalized and exploited people. In some form or the other, overt or covert, in many subtle ways, the prejudice against this weaker section persists.

The National Policy on Education (1986) devoted a full section on 'Education for Equality'. The major goal of the policy for the education of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is 'equalization with non- scheduled castes and tribes at all stages and levels of education.'

Scheduled caste students are generally considered as low achievers. Shukla et.al (1994), Singh (1996), Kingdon (1998), Aggarwal (2000), found the scheduled caste students as poor achievers even after controlling other variables such as parental education and house hold wealth. Reasons

for the poor achievement of scheduled caste students can be attributed to the fact that the SC population is acutely disadvantaged, socially and economically, with many pupils being first generation learners. They get few educational facilities; do not use and derive enough benefit from such facilities, resulting in poor achievement (Aggarwal 2000). Socio-economic status plays an important role in the academic achievement of an individual. Students in any educational institution come from different socio-economic classes. A class in a society is a psycho-social grouping of human population whose socio-economic levels are similar. Every class bears its own ideology, characteristic patterns of overt behaviour, typical methods of nurturing children, their particular aspirations in regard to education, vocation and occupation and accepted standards of social activities. Therefore the values, intelligence, achievement, ideas, ambitions of the students vary according to their socio-economic classes. Thus, the socio-economic factors play significant role in developing abilities of students and in facilitating their achievement. The factor of status has an impact on the performance of the students. It has been observed that socio-economic status of parents and environment at home exert a great influence on academic achievement of students. It is first important thing in determining what a student is and what he is going to be in future. There are many conditions which shape the proper academic atmosphere in schools are not completely in the control

Thus, in the present study an attempt is made in the direction of exploring the impact of Socio-economic status on the academic achievement of scheduled caste students. For the present investigation socio-economic status of scheduled caste students is taken as correlate of their academic achievement.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

**A Study of Academic Achievement of Scheduled Caste Students in Second Language in Relation to their Socio-Economic Status at High School Stage.**

## **OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS**

1. **Academic Achievement:** In the present study the academic achievement is operationally defined as the marks secured by the students in English achievement test constructed by the investigator herself.
2. **Socio-Economic Status** In the present study, the definition given by Bhardwaj, Gupta and Chauhan (1989) is taken as operational definition. Socio-economic Status is thus, operationally defined as ranking of an individual by the society he lives in terms of his material belongings and cultural possessions along with the degree of respect, power and influence he wields.
3. **Second Language:** Even though English was supposed to be phased out by 1965, in article 343 of the Indian Constitution, it continues as India's other official language. English being other official language is taken as Second Language for the present study.
4. **Scheduled Castes:** Article 341 of the Indian Constitution allows the government to compile a schedule (list) of castes, races, or tribes or parts of groups within castes, races, or tribes that are economically and socially disadvantaged and are therefore entitled to protection and specified benefits under the constitution. Untouchables, also known as Harijans (q.v.) or Dalits (q.v.), constitute the bulk of Scheduled Castes.

These castes are known as Scheduled Castes by the inclusion of them in the schedule appended by the Govt. of India acc. to Act 1935.

## **VARIABLES**

In the present study, Academic Achievement of students constituted the dependent variable, while Socio-Economic Status constituted the independent variable.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To construct an Achievement Test in Second Language i.e. English.
2. To identify the scheduled caste students with high and low Socio-Economic Status by administering Socio-Economic Status Scale.
3. To compare the academic achievement of schedule caste students with high and low socio-economic status in second language.
4. To compare the academic achievement of male and female scheduled caste students with high socio-economic status in second language.
5. To compare the academic achievement of rural and urban scheduled caste students with high socio-economic status in second language.
6. To compare the academic achievement of male and female scheduled caste students with low socio-economic status in second language.
7. To compare the academic achievement of rural and urban scheduled caste students with low socio-economic status in second language.

## **HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

On the basis of above mentioned objectives following hypotheses were formulated:

1. There exists no significant difference in academic achievement of scheduled caste students with high and low socio-economic status in second language.
2. There exists no significant difference in academic achievement of male and female scheduled caste students with high socio-economic status in second language.
3. There exists no significant difference in academic achievement of rural and urban scheduled caste students with high socio-economic status in second language.
4. There exists no significant difference in academic achievement of male and female scheduled caste students with low socio-economic status in second language.
5. There exists no significant difference in academic achievement of rural and urban scheduled caste students with low socio-economic status in second language.

## **SAMPLE**

Three districts for the present study were selected through random sampling technique. But, as the scheduled caste students' studying 10<sup>th</sup> class were the basic units of the study, it was difficult to apply randomizing procedures in selecting schools as well as students, therefore; the method of purposive sampling was selected. 300 scheduled caste students studying 10<sup>th</sup> class were taken as sample for the present investigation. Since each school is having 10-25 scheduled caste students, the sample for the present study was taken from 15 rural and 10 urban schools.

## DESCRIPTION OF TOOLS

1. ‘Socio-Economic Status Scale (SESS)’ by Dr. Rajeev Lochan Bhardwaj, (Km.) Shama Gupta and Dr. N. S. Chauhan to measure the socio-economic status of the students.
2. Achievement Tests (constructed by the investigator herself) to measure the achievement of the students in Second Language (English).

## ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

**TABLE-1**

**Means, SDs and ‘Z’ Values for Socio-Economic Status of High and Low Groups of Students in Second Language**

S.No.	Variable	Group	N	Means	SDs	‘Z’ Values
1	Socio-Economic Status	High	115	29.13	8.11	8.28**
		Low	83	18.60	9.30	

\*\* Indicates significant at 0.01 level

An examination of the table 1 shows that ‘Z’ value (8.28) between the mean scores of academic achievement of scheduled caste students with respect to high and low socio-economic status groups was found to be significant at 0.01 level. Hence the null hypothesis ‘There exists no significant difference in academic achievement of scheduled caste students with high and low socio-economic status in second language’, stands rejected. This gives rise to interpretation that

students with high socio-economic status are provided better home environment. They avail better learning opportunities. They get proper guidance under the supervision of their parents. Hence, they exhibit better achievement than the students belonging to low socio-economic status group. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Shukla (1984) and Mehrotra (1986) who revealed that achievement of students was positively related to their socio-economic status.

**TABLE- 2**

**Means, SDs and 'Z' values for Gender and Locality of High Socio-Economic Status Group  
of Students in Second Language**

S.No.	Variable	Group	N	Means	SDs	'Z' Values
1	Gender	Male	55	28.18	6.45	1.10(NS)
		Female	60	29.83	9.37	
2	Locality	Rural	48	27.16	5.70	2.33*
		Urban	67	30.44	9.33	

\* Indicates significant at .05 level

NS - Not Significant



Table 2 reveals that 'z' value (1.10) between the mean scores of academic achievement of male and female scheduled caste students of high socio-economic status group was found to be insignificant. This indicates that the null hypothesis 'There exists no significant difference in academic achievement of male and female scheduled caste students with high socio-economic status in second language' is retained. This gives rise to interpretation that gender has nothing to do with the academic achievement of scheduled caste students in case of high socio-economic status.

Table 2 further reveals that 'z' value (2.33) between the mean scores of academic achievement of rural and urban scheduled caste students of high socio-economic status group was found to be significant at .05 level. This shows that the null hypothesis 'There exists no significant difference in academic achievement of rural and urban scheduled caste students with high socio-economic status in second language', is rejected. This may be attributed the fact urban students are more serious towards their studies. They make the proper utilization of learning opportunities. Thus, they stand better in academic achievement as compared to their rural counterparts.

**TABLE -3**

**Means, SDs and ‘Z’ Values for Gender and Locality of Low Socio-Economic Status Group of Students in Second Language**

S.No.	Variable	Group	N	Means	SDs	‘Z’ Values
1	Gender	Male	42	17.11	7.65	1.47 (NS)
		Female	41	20.12	10.61	
2	Locality	Rural	51	16.54	7.76	2.44*
		Urban	32	21.87	10.66	

\* Indicates significant at .05 level.

NS- Not Significant

Table 3 reflects that ‘z’ value (1.47) between the mean scores of academic achievement of male and female scheduled caste students of low socio-economic status group was found to be insignificant. This states that the null hypothesis ‘There exists no significant difference in academic achievement of male and female scheduled caste students with low socio-economic

status in second language' is accepted. This may be due to the fact that both male and female students belong to low socio-economic status level. Therefore, due to lack of proper learning facilities they did not show any significant difference in their academic achievement.

A perusal of the table 3 further indicates that 'z' value (2.44) between the mean scores of academic achievement of rural and urban scheduled caste students of low socio-economic status group was found to be significant at 0.05 level. Hence the null hypothesis 'There exists no significant difference in academic achievement of rural and urban scheduled caste students with low socio-economic status in second language', stands rejected. This gives rise to interpretation that urban students are more serious to attain high level of academic performance. Therefore, being more oriented to studies, they work hard. Moreover, they get extra classes in schools and are motivated by their teachers to perform better. Hence, they show better achievement as compared to their rural counter parts. This result is in agreement with the findings of Jain (1981) in which it was found that achievement of the pupils from urban areas was better than that of the pupils from rural areas.

### **EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

A perusal of the present study makes it evident that the investigator attempted to break new ground in research on academic performance of the students. The focus on students' academic achievement constitutes new dimensions of research on attainment level. Findings of the present study reveal some important educational implications for teachers, teacher-educators, school authorities, parents and students.

The study reveals that socio-economic status of scheduled caste students plays a significant role in determining academic achievement of students. Students with high socio-economic status of exhibited better achievement than the students with low socio-economic status. Therefore, students who hail from low socio-economic status should be provided proper learning facilities and a suitable home environment so that they can excel in their academic achievement. Such students with low socio-economic status should be given financial help by the school authorities. There are many schemes launched by our government to educate the students with low socio-economic status at minimal cost. The schools should properly utilise these schemes for the upliftment and education of students with low socio-economic status. They should be given scholarships stipends etc. The schools should provide free textbooks and uniforms etc. to them, so that they do not feel neglected due to lack of resources and get motivated to perform better. Their class teachers and counsellors should interact with their parents to get the feed back and to solve the problems, which hamper their achievement. These parent-teacher meetings should be the regular feature of the school programme to encourage such students for better academic performance.

### REFERENCES

- Aggarwal, Yash (2000), 'Primary Education in Delhi: How much do the Children Learn?' NIEPA, New Delhi.
- Agrawal, Archana (2002), 'Some Correlates of Academic Achievement' Indian Journal of Educational Research, Vol. 21(2), 75-76 pp.
- Bhardwaj, et.al.(1989), 'Socio-Economic Status Scale (SESS)' National Psychological Corporation, Agra.

- Devanesan, Paul P. (1990), 'Socio-Economic Status, Achievement-Motivation and Scholastic Achievement of Higher Secondary Students' M. Phil. Edu., Alagappa Univ.
- Jain, S.S. (1981), 'A Study of the Impact of Reading on the Achievement of Pupils of Class VII in Different School Subjects' Ph.D. Edu., SPU, Third Survey of Research in Education, 669 pp.
- Kingdon, Geeta Gandhi (1998), 'How Much do Schools Matter to Pupil Achievement in India?' Journal of Educational Planning & Administration, Vol. 12, No.1 January.
- Mehrotra, S. (1986), "A Study of the Relationship between Intelligence, Socio-Economic Status, Anxiety, Personality, Adjustment and Academic Achievement of High School Students", Ph.D., Edu., Kan, university.
- Ministry of Human Resource Development (1986), 'National Policy on Education, 1986, Programme of Action' Ministry of Human Resources Development, Department of Education, New Delhi, 23-26 pp.
- Shukla, S. et. al. (1993), 'A Study of Attainment of Primary School Students in Various States' DMESDP, NCERT, New Delhi.